exemption from excise duty on certain specific products manufactured in rural areas by registered cooperative societies or by women's societies or by institutions recognised by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission or by the State Khadi and Village Industries or by units run with the cash assistance from District Rural Development Agencies under the Integratec Rural Development Programme (IRDP). As regards sales tax, it is a state subject of taxation under the Constitution

Different levels of Excise Levy for identical products

903. SHRI M VINCENT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether Government levy different levels of excise duties for the same product, like synthetic detergents having different quality norms, and

(b) whether Government are considering higher levels of excise duties on products which have harmful effects on the consumers so as to discourage production of such products and if so, what are the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Excise duty is levied on goods manufactured in the country and generally the rate of duty chargeable on goods is uniform irrespective of the quality.

(b) Presently, there is no proposal for imposing higher levels of excise duty in general on products which are harmful to the consumers. However, certain items like cigarettes, tobacco, pan masala are already subjected to relatively high levels of excise duty, which is likely to affect the excise consumption of such items.

Selling of Reliance Shares by L & T

904 SHRI M. VINCENT
SHRI RAJUBHAI A PARMAR

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 14-10-1990 to the effect that Larsen and Toubro (L&T) have sold 50 lakh Reliance shares,

(b) if so, whether Government made any enquiry to find out whether the established stock exchange regulations were adhered to in the sale of these shares,

(c) whether Government also enquired into the allegation that the rate of the shares prevalent at that time was about Rs 30 per share which was higher than the price registered with Larsen and Toubro;

(d) if so, what are the names of the brokers involved in the sale of these shares;

(e) whether Government have ascertained whether these brokers are relatives of some of the Directors of L&T Board and if so, what is the outcome of the enquiry and what action has been taken thereon, and

(f) whether Government propose to hold any CBI enquiry covering all aspects of sale of these shares?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (f) It is for the management of a company to decide when and in what manner any shares held by it should be sold. However, allegations contained in the news-item relating to sale of shares by L&T published in